

GLENALBYN SWIMMING CLUB AGM 21/11/2005

I appear to be repeating myself each year at the AGM , it is difficult to believe how successful the club has become and even harder to believe that we are still improving. This has, of course, been down to the great swimmers and coaches that the club has and similarly the continuing support of the parents who get up early in the morning and give up their weekends at galas. It wasn't until I had to do the same for my children that I realised what a saint my dad was and how little appreciation and understanding I gave – yes parents you are saints and thank you. I must also thank our wonderful committee who work so hard behind the scenes – the greater the success the club has – the harder it is for the committee to support this success with increasing demands. They endeavour to provide the club with the platform to move forward in swimming, and our coaches are very appreciative of this.

The past year has once again been very successful one for Glenalbyn SC. As in previous years we had a record number of attendees at the major end of year galas, namely division 1, div 2 and National championships. We were the biggest club at nationals and others in swimming in Ireland have now woken up to this fact and to our success. Two of our female swimmers Meabh McConville and Grace Sweeney and our Boys Junior Relay - Owen Campbell, Dan Cochrane, James Phelan and Philip Meagher are national champions I am sure we will have many more successes and champions in the years ahead. Our Swim club web site has a listing of our role of honours and it is terrific to see the amount of names for Team Ireland, Team Leinster, National Squad and Leinster Squad. Each of these squads provides additional training for swimmers who wish to improve on their current success and I would encourage swimmers to avail of this, especially now that pool time is at a premium in Glenalbyn – we do the least number of hours of almost all senior squads in Ireland – so it is a very important form of support for our swimmers.

This year the club had several swimmers who retired and as a result we did a recruitment drive to get new swimmers into the club. This was very successful – it is very important that we continue to look for new talent and have a constant flow into the younger groups in order to feed this through to the faster squads. We cannot afford to become complacent about the success of our more senior squads and take our eye off future talent. We would dearly love to be able to offer squads more pool time and space but currently this is not possible.

Stephen McBride continues to work wonders with the senior squad and exceed all expectations it was terrific to have a large team attending the Nationals, and see so swimmers supporting their colleagues. This squad will go to Exeter in January, our first overseas gala in many years. It is very important that we look to competition abroad, it can only improve our swimming, there is no point in just being a local hero. I was listening to Michael Johnson at the World Athletics Championships and he was saying that it is very important to get international competition in order to improve oneself and

to have something to train for. If it is good enough for Michael, it's certainly good enough for me.

The 2 main age-group squads are the Piranhas and Torpedo looked after by myself and Paula. Most of these swimmers attended the Div 1 and 2 meets this year and built on their successes of last year. Again, there were many medals amongst them and PBs for most swimmers. I think that at the start of the year, some swimmers thought they would never be near division 1, but they put in some very hard work and got what they deserved. It is no longer such a huge obstacle to them.

Our 2 younger squads under the guidance of Janet and Aoife also attended galas during the year and achieved many medals and some excellent times. The Dolphins had great success at their gala in Cork and long may this tradition continue. Since last year, Aoife has been able to get more pool time and space which has enabled her to grow this group. It is wonderful to see the enthusiasm of these young swimmers.

Finally, I would like to address a few issues with you:

We have noted over the past season that we have had to withdraw a number of relays from galas particularly in the younger squads – this has often led to great disappointment to other swimmers. I would ask parents to be very conscious, that if they decide their son/daughter cannot make a gala at the last minute, that it most likely does impact on a relay too.

Similarly, if parents have an issue with a particular event that the swimmer is entered in, please discuss this with the coach and not with the gala secretary as she cannot take swimmers out of competition without the knowledge of the coach. It is very important that swimmers experience all strokes and all distances, no matter how hard it is. There is no point in running scared.

Again, I need to remind parents and swimmers to ensure their coach is informed what sessions swimmers are committed to attend for training – it will save us asking us where they were. Likewise, if swimmers are going away for a small or long holiday, please tell your coach well in advance- we seem to fail at this in all squads. We would also like swimmers to arrive on time and be on the bank at least 5 minutes before the session starts, there are still too many late arrivals at sessions.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for their support over the last year, and to my coach colleagues and committee who were very helpful to me while I was on maternity leave.

Good luck in the coming season.

Thank you for your attention.